UNITED NATIONS

DP

Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund

Distr.
GENERAL

DP/FPA/1996/24
5 August 1996

ORIGINAL: English

Third regular session 1996
9 - 13 September 1996, New York
Item 12 of the provisional agenda
UNFPA

UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR, THE UNFPA COUNTRY PROGRAMME FOR MADAGASCAR

Report of the Executive Director

I. BACKGROUND

1. The Executive Board is requested to approve a one-year extension of the country programme of Madagascar (through 1998). This will permit synchronization of the UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF programme cycles. To accommodate this extension and some additional activities in 1996 and 1997, the Board is requested to approve an additional $3.8 million from UNFPA's regular resources for the Madagascar country programme.

2. The current country programme is the third UNFPA-assisted programme for Madagascar. It was approved by the Governing Council in June 1993, for the period 1993-1997, in the amount of $7 million, of which $2 million was to be sought from multi-bilateral resources. During the first years of the programme, the Government and the World Bank were unable to reach an agreement on economic adjustment measures, and this discouraged other donors from coming forth. The Fund's resource situation was such that the Executive Director was able to authorize funding the entire programme from UNFPA regular resources. Since the programme was structured using the former workplan categories, the present request is being presented in that format as well, but efforts are under way to re-orient activities towards an integrated reproductive health approach, including family planning and sexual health.

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3. The objectives of the third country programme are to: (a) assist the Government formulate operational plans and programmes for the implementation of the national population policy; (b) reduce the maternal and child mortality rates by 25 per cent by expanding accessibility to integrated maternal and child health and family planning (MCH/FP) services; (c) to increase family planning coverage and the contraceptive prevalence rate from 3 per cent in 1992 to 14 per cent in 1997; (d) to improve the status and the role of women in the development process; and (e) to enhance knowledge of demographic indicators for planning and evaluation purposes.

4. A mid-term review process took place in August 1995 and included representatives from the Government, United Nations agencies and organizations, the donor community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The review found that the implementation of the programme as a whole has been satisfactory and consistent with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), even though the Madagascar programme had been developed prior to the ICPD.

5. Given the relatively low level of population activities in Madagascar, the scope of the UNFPA programme is quite broad. The focus, however, is on addressing the high levels of maternal and child mortality by helping to set up effective delivery systems for family planning and other reproductive health services. Also, in view of the previous neglect in creating demand for family planning, many of the programme activities focus on sensitization and on information, education and communication (IEC) activities. A total of 73 per cent of the programmed resources are committed to these two interrelated programmes. The programme focuses its inputs at the central level and in four of the country's six provinces.

6. Overall, the programme has progressed well. There were some delays at the beginning on the part of the Government and other implementing agencies. Given the number of national organizations involved in the implementation of the population policy, there has been a strong need for effective collaboration and reinforcement of the intersectoral nature of the programme. The programme has, however, been successful in building formal and informal mechanisms for such coordination and collaboration. Another positive factor in programme implementation has been the growing commitment of national institutions and organizations to the country's population goals. Significant gains have been registered in creating awareness among the country's leaders on the need to expand reproductive health services.

II. PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

7. All activities proposed under the original country programme had become operational by 1995. Total expenditures as of December 1995 were $4.0 million. It is expected that expenditures will reach $2.2 million annually in 1996 and onwards, now that all the projects in the programme have become operational. Taking into account this projection, the needs expressed through the recommendations of the mid-term review, and the extension of the programme for one additional year, an additional $3.8 million is needed to cover the programme activities to the end of 1998.

8. The additional amount requested would be utilized, among other activities, to undertake a demographic and health survey in 1997 that would be jointly financed by UNFPA, UNICEF and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The survey would provide up-to-date information on reproductive health and it would serve as an evaluation tool for the current programme by comparing the findings with those of the 1992 survey. Given the weakness in local expertise in population and development strategy, the contract of the Chief Technical Adviser would be extended for two years, and policy-oriented studies would be initiated to update the objectives and targets of the national population policy in order to better relate them to the ICPD Programme of Action. The implementation of the population programme and the coordination of its activities would be decentralized to the provincial level. Further advocacy activities would be organized at the central and, as decentralization continues, at provincial levels as well. The programme would provide on-the-job training in population and development for national counterpart staff. The gender, population and development component of the programme would be expanded to cover rural areas by utilizing local NGOs.

9. In the area of IEC, a network would be developed to reach the maximum number of women and men in the family life education programme; IEC material and family life brochures would be printed and visual aids would be produced; counseling programmes on reproductive health for youth would be developed. Steps would be taken towards the generalization of population education in schools through the cascade training of teachers and the provision of family life education books for students and training materials for teachers.

10. Although the target set for the number of family planning centres has been reached, it is planned that an additional 80 centres would be opened by the end of 1998, resulting in the need for training additional personnel in family planning techniques, management and counseling. It will also be necessary to provide contraceptives and maternity kits, renovate health centres and provide technical assistance. In addition, it is planned to develop a community-based distribution system for contraceptives, including the elaboration of training manuals.

11. UNFPA proposes to increase its assistance to Madagascar from $7 million to $10.8 million over the period 1993-1998. The supplementary budget of $3.8 million, from UNFPA's regular resources, would be utilized to expand the coverage of the programme beyond that envisaged in the original approved programme and to extend the programme life by one year. The following table shows how the additional funds would be accommodated by programme area (in millions of $):

Sectors	Approved by Governing Council, 1993	Expenditures 1993-1995	Additional funds requested	Total 1993-1998
Maternal and child health and family planning	3.5	2.2	2.0	5.5
Information, education and communication	1.6	.8	.3	1.9
Population policy formulation and dynamics	0.7	.4	.4	1.1
Data collection and analysis	0.4	.2	.3	.7
Women, population and development	0.6	.3	.6	1.2
Multisectoral activities	.2	.1	.2	.4
TOTAL	7.0	4.0	3.8	10.8

III. RECOMMENDATION

12. The Executive Director recommends that the Executive Board extend the Madagascar country programme for one year, to the end of 1998, and authorize the Executive Director to programme the supplementary amount of $3.8 million from UNFPA regular resources, subject to the availability of such resources, over the period 1996-1998